

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

With this Amendment, Applicant amends claims 1, 16, 19, 22, 26, 36 and cancels claim 33 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant submits that no new issues are raised and no new matter is introduced by the amendments to claims 1, 16, 19, 22, 26, 36 since such amendments comply with the requirements of form expressly set forth in the Office Action dated September 29, 2006. As such, the amendments to the claims should be entered and considered at this juncture. Therefore, claims 1-32 and 34-46 are all the claims currently pending in the present application. Based on the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicant requests reconsideration of the application and allowance of the claims.

I. Rejection of the Claims

In the Office Action dated September 29, 2006, the Examiner indicated that the subject matter of claims 15, 16, 25, 33, 36, 37, 40, 41, 43 and 46 are objected to but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. (See pg. 11 of the Office Action) Particularly, Applicant notes that the Examiner correctly conceded that the combination of Lin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,366,791) and Speeney et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,570,983) (and the cited prior art of record) does not teach or suggest the features of claim 26 in combination with the features of claim 33. (See *id.*) As such, Applicant has herein canceled claim 33 without prejudice or disclaimer and amended independent claim 26 to include the recitations of canceled claim 33. Applicant therefore respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the § 103(a) rejection of independent claim 26 and its dependent claims 27-32 and 44-46.

Since independent claims 1, 19 and 22 are herein amended to include recitations analogous to those recited in previously submitted claim 33, which was determined to be allowable, Applicant submits that the combination of Lin and Speeney (or any cited prior art of record) does not teach or suggest the features of independent claims 1, 19 and 22. Applicant therefore respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the § 103(a) rejection of independent claims 1, 19, and 22 and their respective dependent claims 2-18, 34-36 and 20-21, 37-40, as well as 23-25 and 41-43.

As noted above, on page 11 of the Office Action dated September 29, 2006, the Examiner indicated that the subject matter of claims 15, 16, 25, 36, 37, 40, 41, 43 and 46 are objected to but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their respective

Appl. No.: 10/720,029
Amdt. dated 02/28/2007
Reply to Office action of September 29, 2006

base claims and any intervening claims. As such, Applicant herein amends claims 16, 36, and 40 to include all of the recitations of the respective base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant therefore submits that claims 16, 36 and 40 are allowable and respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 16, 36, and 40.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims of the present application are in condition for allowance. It is respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued in due course. Examiner D'Agosta is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present application.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



Cory C. Davis
Registration No. 59,932

Customer No. 00826
ALSTON & BIRD LLP
Bank of America Plaza
101 South Tryon Street, Suite 4000
Charlotte, NC 28280-4000
Tel Charlotte Office (704) 444-1000
Fax Charlotte Office (704) 444-1111

ELECTRONICALLY FILED USING THE EFS-WEB ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM OF THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE ON FEBRUARY 28, 2007.